

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
73544 Hwy 64
Meeker, CO 81641**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2006-093 -EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional):

PROJECT NAME: Brush Hole Allotment (06020) Change in Livestock Kind

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T 1 S, R 94 W, Sec 19, 29-32; T 2S, R 94W Sec 24, 25, 36

APPLICANT: Daren and Tammy Olson

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction:

Proposed Action: Daren and Tammy Olson, holders of the grazing preference on the Brush Hole allotment (06020) have applied to change the kind of livestock using the allotment from sheep to cattle. The present license reads as follows:

Allot #	Name	Livestock#	Kind	Date On	Date off	% BLM	AUMs
6020	Brush Hole	400	sheep	06/01	09/30	33	106

Due to the steep slopes and heavy brush on the eastern part of the BLM, Olson's have agreed to begin with an 8:1 conversion ratio with the understanding that we would adjust the allocation for cattle upward or downward based on monitoring. Their proposed grazing schedule is as follows:

Allot #	Name	Livestock#	Kind	Date On	Date off	% BLM	AUMs
6020	Brush Hole	50	cattle	06/01	09/30	23	66

The Brush Hole Grazing Permit was analyzed in CO- 017-WR-99-51-EA and was approved and renewed for a ten year term on 4/6/99. The allotment contains 900 acres of public land and 800 acres of private land. The allotment has been categorized as a "C" or Custodial allotment, meaning that no significant problems/issues/resource conflicts have been identified and past management of the allotment has been satisfactory. Ethel Owens, the previous owner provided for good stewardship of the allotment's public lands. Forage production on the 800 acres of private lands has in the past been rated at 215 AUMs. Ninety percent of the BLM lands included in this permit lay above the Segar Mountain Rim. Grazing use of this area is controlled by

availability of water in: 1) a pond at the head of Segar Gulch and 2) a well at the head of Hay Gulch.

No Action Alternative: Olson's application for the change in livestock kind would be denied.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD:

NEED FOR THE ACTION: The previous ranch owner was in the sheep business and Olson's, the present owners, are in the cattle business and wish to use the accompanying BLM grazing preference as part of their cattle operation.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: P 2-23

Decision Language: Livestock Grazing Management: With minor exceptions, livestock grazing will be managed as described in the 1981 Rangeland Program Summary, Record of Decision for the 1981 White River Resource Area Grazing Management Final Environmental Impact Statement. 1) Allocation of forage among predominant grazing animals and other uses.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The entire White River Resource area has been classified as either attainment or unclassified for all pollutants, and most of the area has been designated prevention

of significant deterioration (PSD) class II. The proposed action is not located within a ten mile radius of any special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas. The air quality criteria pollutant likely to be most affected by the proposed actions is the level of inhalable particulate matter, specifically particles ten microns or less in diameter (PM₁₀) associated with fugitive dust. Unfortunately, no air quality monitoring data is available for the survey area. However, it is apparent that current air quality near the proposed location is good because only one location on the western slope (Grand Junction, CO) is monitoring for criteria pollutants other than PM₁₀. Furthermore, the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) estimates the maximum PM₁₀ levels (24-hour average) in rural portions of western Colorado to be near 50 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³). This estimate is well below the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for PM₁₀ (24-hour average) of 150 µg/m³.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Potential environmental consequences of the proposed action would be similar to potential consequences of the current grazing operation. Change in livestock use as outlined in the proposed actions will result in a reduction in AUMs from 106 (sheep) to 66 (cattle). Theoretically, reducing AUMs would leave more ground cover to protect soils from eolian processes minimizing potential production of fugitive dust. However, sheep and cattle have different grazing habits and foraging preferences. The continuous summer long grazing schedule combined with local climatic conditions and cattle's tendency to congregate near water could reduce ground cover in high use areas leaving soils exposed to eolian processes and elevating potential for fugitive dust production.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No change in livestock use would be granted. The summer long grazing schedule would continue with 400 sheep. Potential impacts would be similar to those of the proposed action.

Mitigation: None

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The BLM/Colorado SHPO Protocol agreement requires the BLM to identify all historic properties and sacred sites on all lands within Colorado that are within the APE of a BLM undertaking (1998 Protocol VII (A) p. 4), which is defined as the geographic area(s) within which an undertaking may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties (36 CFR 800.2). During Section 106 review, a cultural resource assessment was completed for this allotment on May 10, 2006 following the procedures outlined in IM-WO-99-039, IM-CO-99-007 and IM-CO-99-019. Copies of the cultural resource assessment are available in the White River Field Office archaeology files and the summary report is attached to the range allotment lease file. One cultural resource inventory has been conducted within the allotment by a White River Field Office Archaeologist and no National Register or otherwise eligible cultural properties are known to be situated in this allotment. There are no known historic or prehistoric properties considered to be potentially 'at risk' from damage due to grazing allotment operations. Based on available data, a low potential exists for historic or prehistoric properties in this Allotment. Subsequent cultural resource inventories may be

conducted in areas where livestock concentrations coincide with high potential for discovering vulnerable historic or prehistoric properties.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Direct impacts that may occur where livestock concentrate include trampling, chiseling and churning of site soils, cultural features and artifacts, artifact breakage and impacts from standing, leaning and rubbing against above ground features and rock art. Indirect impacts may include soil erosion, gullying and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism. In areas where cultural site presence coincides with areas of livestock concentration, continued grazing may contribute to substantial ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to historic properties. Alteration of grazing patterns by rotating pastures should have the effect of decreasing any potential damage to existing cultural resources by decreasing the time frame for impacts on any given site. No increased impacts are anticipated and no impacts to any known historic or prehistoric properties are anticipated.

Environmental Consequences of the No Grazing Alternative: Under this alternative, the grazing lease would not be renewed. This alternative would result in no continuing impacts to historic properties.

Mitigation: If historic or prehistoric materials are uncovered by the permittee, the permittee shall immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the BLM.

All persons in the area who are associated with this project must be informed that if anyone is found disturbing historic, archaeological, or scientific resources, including collecting artifacts, the person or persons will be subject to prosecution.

The BLM authorized officer must be notified, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Activities must stop in the vicinity of the discovery and the discovery must be protected for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

If in connection with operations under this contract the project proponent, his contractors, subcontractors, or the employees of any of them, discovers, encounters or becomes aware of any objects or sites of cultural or paleontological value or scientific interest such as historic or prehistoric ruins, graves or grave markers, fossils, or artifacts, the proponent shall immediately suspend all operations in the vicinity of the cultural or paleontological resource and shall notify the BLM authorized officer of the findings. Operations may resume at the discovery site upon receipt of written instructions and authorization by the authorized officer.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: There are no known noxious or problem weeds on the allotment. There is also very little cheatgrass on BLM lands in the allotment.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Implementing the change in kind of livestock will result in no change in the present lack of noxious or problem weeds and cheatgrass.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: None

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: This allotment is composed primarily by a heavy mountain shrub community dominated in character by Utah serviceberry and Gambel oak with intermixed big sagebrush basins and draws and grassy bald ridgeline communities. A large number of migratory birds fulfill nesting functions in these structurally complex types from mid-May through mid-July, including species of higher conservation interest, namely Virginia's warbler (mountain shrub), Brewer's sparrow (sagebrush), and green-tailed towhee (both). These three species are common to abundant in the allotment and evenly distributed throughout the Resource Area's mountain and mixed shrub communities. The allotment's small, scattered aspen inclusions (about 33 total acres) are not generally capable of supporting a full complement of migratory birds typically associated with the aspen type, and only the more generalized species (e.g., house wren, warbling vireo) can be expected.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Much of the BLM acreage within the allotment (about 500 acres) is on steep, heavily vegetated slopes (mountain shrub) that did not incur substantial domestic grazing pressure by sheep--a situation likely to be repeated with cattle. Cattle use would likely concentrate on grassy ridgeline and sagebrush sites in upper basin and drainage positions (about 300 total acres). Especially in close proximity to water, use could begin as early as June 1 and extend through much of the nesting season. Although use would be largely coincident with nesting and may be locally heavy in the vicinity of limited water sources, overall reductions in ground cover would occur progressively and may be expected to reach moderate use levels (e.g., 50%) near the later stages of nesting. Although stronger reductions in ground cover may, in some cases, be expected to suppress the availability of forage for granivores, invertebrate prey substrate, and/or supplemental nesting cover (e.g., ground nesting species), substantial or widespread reductions in nesting success and/or chick survival would not be expected.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Current grazing effects on migratory bird nesting activity would be similar to those discussed in the proposed action.

Mitigation: None.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no known hazardous or other solid wastes on the subject lands. No hazardous materials are known to have been used, stored or disposed of at sites included in the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: No listed or extremely hazardous materials in excess of threshold quantities are proposed for use in this project. While commercial preparations of fuels and lubricants proposed for use may contain some hazardous constituents, they would be stored, used and transported in a manner consistent with applicable laws, and the generation of hazardous wastes would not be anticipated. Solid wastes would be properly disposed of.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No hazardous or other solid wastes would be generated under the no-action alternative.

Mitigation: None.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: Surface Water: The proposed project area is located on the drainage divide between White River Stream Segments 7, 9a, and 16. Affected watersheds are as follows: White River (segment 7); Hay Gulch, Sheep Creek (segment 9a), and Segar Gulch (segment 16). Hay Gulch and Sheep Creek are both ephemeral tributaries to the White River. Segar Gulch is an ephemeral tributary to Dry Fork Piceance Creek (intermittent with perennial reaches) which flows into Piceance Creek a tributary to the White River. The White River is a tributary to the Green River in Utah which is a tributary to the Colorado River.

The “Status of Water Quality in Colorado – 2004” plus the 2006 update (CDPHE, 2006b) were reviewed for information related to the proposed recreation area. The grazing transfer will impact three different water quality stream segments (7, 9a, 16) within the White River Basin. Stream segment 7 of the White River Basin is defined as the main stem of the White River from a point immediately above the confluence with Miller Creek to a point immediately above the confluence with Piceance Creek. Stream segment 7 has not been designated “use protected”. An intermediate level of water quality protection applies to waters that have not been designated outstanding waters or use-protected waters. For these waters, no degradation is allowed unless deemed appropriate following an antidegradation review. The state has classified segment 7 as being beneficial for the following uses: Cold aquatic life 1, Water supply, Agriculture (12/1-3/1), Recreation 1b (3/2-11/30), and Recreation 1a (CDPHE, 2006b).

Stream segment 9a of the White River Basin is defined as all tributaries to the White River, including all wetlands, from the confluence of the North and South Forks to a point immediately above the confluence with Piceance Creek, which are not within the boundary of the national forest lands, except for the specific listing in segments 9b and 10b. The state has listed stream segment 9a as “use protected”. The antidegradation review requirements in the Antidegradation Rule are not applicable to waters designated use-protected. For those waters, only the protection specified in each reach will apply. The state has classified segment 9a as being beneficial for the

following uses: Cold aquatic life 2, Water supply, Agriculture, and Recreation 2 (CDPHE, 2006b).

Stream segment 16 of the White River Basin is defined as all tributaries to Piceance Creek from the Emily Oldhand diversion dam to the confluence with the White River.

Stream segment 16 has also been designated “use protected”. The antidegradation review requirements in the Antidegradation Rule are not applicable to waters designated use-protected. For those waters, only the protection specified in each reach will apply. The state has classified segment 16 as being beneficial for the following uses: Warm aquatic life 2, Recreation 2, and Agriculture.

Newly promulgated Colorado Regulations Nos. 93 and 94 (CDPHE, 2006c and 2006d, respectively) were also reviewed for information related to the proposed project area drainages. Regulation No. 93 is the State’s list of water-quality-limited segments requiring Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). The 2006 list of segments needing development of TMDLs includes two segments within the White River - segment 9b, White River tributaries North & South Forks to Piceance Creek, specifically the Flag Creek portion (for impairment from selenium with a low priority for TMDL development) and segment 22, tributaries to the White River, Douglas Creek to the Colorado/Utah boarder, specifically West Evacuation Wash, and Douglas Creek (sediment impairments). Regulation 94 is the State’s list of water bodies identified for monitoring and evaluation, to assess water quality and determine if a need for TMDLs exists. The list includes two White River segments that are potentially impaired – 9 and 22. Stream segments 7, 9a, and 16 were not listed.

Ground Water: No ground water resources will be affected.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Implementation of the proposed action will actually result in a reduction in active AUMs. As stated in the air quality section, sheep and cattle do have different foraging preferences; cattle tend to congregate near watering sources while sheep are more dispersed. The proposed action indicates that in past years the availability of water is what dictates the distribution and location of livestock within the allotment. Continuous summer long grazing schedule combined with local climatic conditions and cattle’s tendency to congregate near water could reduce ground cover in high use areas leaving soils exposed to erosional processes increasing sedimentation downstream and potentially deteriorating water quality. However, potential impacts to water quality resulting from implementation of the proposed action will likely be reduced in comparison to current grazing operations.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No change in livestock use would be granted. The summer long grazing schedule would continue with 400 sheep. Potential impacts would be similar to those of the proposed action.

Mitigation: Monitor health and vigor of vegetal communities near watering sources.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The affected portions of stream segments 7, 9a, and 16 of the White River Basin currently meet water quality standards

set by the state. Water quality in the affected stream segment should continue to meet standards following the change in livestock use for the Brush Hole allotment.

WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: There are no known wetlands or riparian zones on Public Lands within the Brush Hole allotment.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: There will be no impact on riparian areas as a result of the proposed action.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: No riparian system will be affected.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No ACEC's, flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, or Wild and Scenic Rivers, threatened, endangered or sensitive plants exist within the area affected by the proposed action. For threatened, endangered and sensitive plant species Public Land Health Standard is not applicable since neither the proposed nor the no-action alternative would have any influence on populations of, or habitats potentially occupied by, special status plants. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1): see Vegetation

Affected Environment: Soils in the allotment are primarily in the Irigul-Parachute complex, the Parachute and Rhone loam units and the Zoltay clay loam and Work loam units. These soils are generally deep to moderately deep, fine texture with good water holding capacity and thus, potential to support native plant communities. The primary limitation to plant growth other than moisture is the short growing season.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: With the proposed grazing plan it is expected that there will be no short or long term negative impact to soils as a result of the proposed change from sheep to cattle grazing.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: Upland soils currently meet the Standard and are expected to continue to meet the Standard following implementation of the proposed action.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3):

Affected Environment: The following table lists the plant community appearance for each of the ecological sites or woodland types on the allotment along with the predominant plant species comprising the composition of each community. Forb species, though important to the diversity of a community and comprising up to 25 to 30% of the composition of several of the plant communities listed, are not presented in the following table because they generally are not significant contributors to the general appearance of the community.

Ecological Site/ Woodland Type	Plant Community Appearance	Predominant Plant Species in Plant Community
Brushy Loam	Deciduous Shrub/grass Shrubland	Serviceberry, oakbrush, snowberry, nodding brome, sedge, slender wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, Letterman and Columbia needle grasses
Loamy Slopes	Mix Shrub/grass Shrubland	Mountain mahogany, bitterbrush, Utah serviceberry, mountain big sagebrush, Letterman needlegrass, beardless bluebunch wheatgrass, sedge, western wheatgrass, junegrass, Indian ricegrass
Mountain Loam	Grass/Open Shrub Shrubland	Polyanthus brome, nodding brome, slender wheatgrass, bearded wheatgrass, Letterman and Columbia needle grasses, mountain big sagebrush, low rabbitbrush, snowberry, serviceberry
Quaking Aspen	Woodland	Utah serviceberry, snowberry, mountain big sagebrush, bearded wheatgrass, onion grass, polyanthus brome, nodding brome, Letterman and Columbia needlegrass, blue wildrye, sedges.
Pinyon- Juniper	Woodland	Pinyon pine, Utah juniper, mountain mahogany, bitterbrush rock spirea, Utah serviceberry, mountain big sagebrush, beardless bluebunch wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, j indian ricegrass, mutton grass

BLM Lands

BRUSH HOLE SOIL UNIT NAME	ECOLOGICALSITE	ACRES	ACRES/AUM	AUMS
Absarokee-Delson channery loams,8-65%slopes	Brushy Loam	34.446	12	3

BRUSH HOLE SOIL UNIT NAME	ECOLOGICALSITE	ACRES	ACRES/AUM	AUMS
Irigul channery loam,5-50%slopes	Loamy Slopes	0.927	8	0
Irigul-Parachute complex,5-30%slopes	Loamy Slopes/Mountain Loam	75.52	6	12
Northwater loam,5-50%slopes	Aspen Woodlands	33.057	5	6
Parachute Loam,25-75%slopes	Brushy Loam	67.891	U	0
Parachute-Rhone loams,5-30%slopes	Mountain Loam	308.544	6	51
Rhone loam,30-75%slopes	Brushy Loam	206.909	U	0
Starman-Vandamore complex,5-40%slopes	Dry Exposure/Dry Exposure	79.003	14	6
Zoltay clay loam, 8-15%slope	Deep Loam	1.107	5	0
		807.404		78

Olson Private Lands

SOIL UNIT NAME	SOILS/ECOLOGICALSITES ECOLOGICALSITE	ACRES	ACRES/ AUM	AUMS
Absarokee-Delson channery loams,8-65%slopes	Brushy Loam	181.617	9	20
Castner channery loam, 5-50%slopes	Pinyon-Juniper woodlands	56.023	16	3
Irigul channery loam,5-50%slopes	Loamy Slopes	0.002	8	0
Irigul-Parachute complex,5-30%slopes	Loamy Slopes/Mountain Loam	130.876	4	32
Northwater loam,5-50%slopes	Aspen Woodlands	26.561	4	6
Parachute Loam,25-75%slopes	Brushy Loam	185.371	12	15
Parachute-Rhone loams,5-30%slopes	Mountain Loam	3.277	5	1
Patent loam,3-8%slopes	Rolling Loam	25.902	6	4
Rentsac-Moyerson-RockOutcrop,complex,5-65%slps	PJ Woodlands/Clayey Slopes	45.408	14	3
Rhone loam,30-75%slopes	Brushy Loam	25.244	14	2
Starman-Vandamore complex,5-40%slopes	Dry Exposure/Dry Exposure	57.369	12	5
Work Loam, 8-15%slope	Deep Loam	2.383	5	0
Zoltay clay loam, 8-15%slope	Deep Loam	185.32	5	37
Zoltay clay loam,15-25%slope	Deep Loam	9.693	7	1
		935.046		129

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The change in kind of livestock from sheep to cattle will result in a shift in forage use from a mix of forbs, browse and grass to one which is primarily composed of grass and grass like species. Livestock preference for grass species will tend to favor a more browse and forb-dominated vegetation composition over the long term. This shift in composition will be more subtle and slower to occur at moderate to light stocking rates. The proposal stocking rate is in the light to moderate range. Because the ecological sites of the allotment tend to be dominated by browse species as a function of precipitation frequency and distribution there will be a long term tendency toward browse dominance in the vegetation composition.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: Continue Rangeland Monitoring studies to determine if use complies with the White River ROD/RMP.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Upland plant communities currently meet the Standard and are expected to continue to meet the Standard following implementation of the change in livestock kind.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: This allotment is composed primarily by a heavy mountain shrub community dominated in character by Utah serviceberry and Gambel oak with intermixed big sagebrush basins and draws and grassy bald ridgeline communities. Although represented largely by big game winter range, deer and elk use the allotment throughout the year. Summer and late winter/early spring use is limited by water, terrain, and snow accumulations; primary use extends from September-January and April-May.

Non-game wildlife using this area are typical and widely distributed in extensive like habitats across the Resource Area and northwest Colorado; there are no narrowly endemic or highly specialized avian (see Migratory Birds above) or mammalian species known to inhabit those lands potentially influenced by this action.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: About 60% of the BLM-administered acreage consists of steep, heavily vegetated mountain shrub slopes that provide secure sources of woody and herbaceous forage and cover for big game and nongame species. These sites would remain relatively unaffected by livestock grazing. The sagebrush and grassland sites (about 40% of BLM acreage) would tend to sustain highest livestock utilization. Moderate use levels and sufficient growing season rest applied to these sites would not unduly influence the availability or diversity of herbaceous forage for fall and winter big game use, would maintain desirable understory composition, and would tend to precondition bunchgrass growth for spring deer use (i.e., increasing accessibility to emerging crown growth). Cattle are not expected to influence the availability of woody forages. Stronger reductions in herbaceous ground cover would influence small mammal populations and habitat in a manner similar to that discussed in the Migratory Bird section. Overall, proposed cattle use is not expected to have a pronounced influence on the utility or suitability of the allotment's wildlife habitats.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Current grazing effects on big game and nongame seasonal habitats would be similar to those discussed in the proposed action.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): The allotment meets the land health standard at the landscape scale, although concentrated livestock use in the vicinity of water sources would continue to depress certain attributes of ground cover as forage and cover for nongame animals on a localized basis (e.g., residual litter, plant diversity/density appropriate to site potential). Although grazing-related effects under either alternative would be expected to reduce the

abundance of certain nongame animals, neither would be expected to have any marked influence on overall animal distribution, the continued availability and connectivity of habitat, or the viability of any animal population.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access and Transportation		X	
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire Management	X		
Forest Management			X
Geology and Minerals	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights			X
Law Enforcement		X	
Noise		X	
Paleontology	X		
Rangeland Management			X
Realty Authorizations	X		
Recreation		X	
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources		X	
Wild Horses	X		

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The project area contains 33 acres of aspen woodland. No surveys have been conducted to determine the age, density or under-story of the woodlands. These stands are isolated and do not have access to them, and as such there is no history of harvest.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Changing the class of livestock from sheep to cattle is not expected to adversely impact the aspen stands. If monitoring shows that these stands are being degraded as a result of grazing use, modifications to the grazing schedule or physical barriers (fences) could be used to correct the problem.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no change in the current condition or impacts to aspen woodlands.

Mitigation: If monitoring determines that grazing is adversely impacting aspen stands a plan would be prepared and implemented to mitigate these impacts.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER RIGHTS

Affected Environment: No water rights have been identified on BLM lands within the Brush Hole allotment. However, the proposed action mentions a livestock watering well situated at the head of Hay Gulch.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The change in livestock use will have no impact on water rights.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: The BLM will obtain a water right for the livestock watering well situated in the head of Hay Gulch if:

1. The well is located on BLM surface.
2. The well is a viable water source for livestock and wildlife.
3. No water right currently exists for the well.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT (SEE VEGETATION)

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Cumulative impacts from the proposed action would not exceed those discussed in the White River Resource Area PRMP/FEIS.

REFERENCES CITED:

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC), 2004a. Regulation No. 37 Classifications and Numeric Standards for Lower Colorado River Basin. Adopted 1983 and Effective January 20, 2004.

CDPHE-WQCC, 2006b. "Status of Water Quality in Colorado – 2006, The Update to the 2002 and 2004 305(b) Report," April 2006.

CDPHE-WQCC, 2006c. "Regulation No. 93, 2006 Section 303(d) List Water-Quality-Limited Segments Requiring TMDLs," effective April 30.

CDPHE-WQCC, 2006d. "Regulation No. 94, Colorado's Monitoring and Evaluation List," effective April 30.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: Daren and Tammy Olson

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Air Quality
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Gabrielle Elliott	Archeologist	Cultural Resources Paleontological Resources
Mark Hafkenschiel	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species, Vegetation, Soils, Rangeland Management, Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species
Melissa J. Kindall	Hazmat Collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Terrestrial and Aquatic
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Access and Transportation
Ken Holsinger	Natural Resource Specialist	Fire Management
Robert Fowler	Forester	Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Penny Brown	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Visual Resources

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

CO-110-2006-093-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION/RATIONALE: It is my decision to authorize the proposed change in kind of livestock grazing the Brush Hole allotment from sheep to cattle subject to the mitigating measures described below. The proposed change will allow the grazing permittees, Daren and Tammy Olson to use the allotment public lands in conjunction with their private lands and, in general, provide stewardship for the entire watershed.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. Appropriate mitigation measures may be identified in consultation with Colorado SHPO within the ten-year period of this lease. It is recommended that a renewal be issued for this lease subject to the allotment specific stipulations. If historic or prehistoric materials are uncovered by the permittee, the permittee shall immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the BLM.
2. If historic or prehistoric materials are uncovered by the permittee, the permittee shall immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the BLM.
3. All persons in the area who are associated with this project must be informed that if anyone is found disturbing historic, archaeological, or scientific resources, including collecting artifacts, the person or persons will be subject to prosecution.
4. The BLM authorized officer must be notified, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Activities must stop in the vicinity of the discovery and the discovery must be protected for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
5. If in connection with operations under this contract the project proponent, his contractors, subcontractors, or the employees of any of them, discovers, encounters or becomes aware of any objects or sites of cultural or paleontological value or scientific interest such as historic or

prehistoric ruins, graves or grave markers, fossils, or artifacts, the proponent shall immediately suspend all operations in the vicinity of the cultural or paleontological resource and shall notify the BLM authorized officer of the findings. Operations may resume at the discovery site upon receipt of written instructions and authorization by the authorized officer.

6. Monitor health and vigor of vegetal communities near watering sources.

7. Continue rangeland monitoring studies to determine if use complies with the White River ROD/RMP.

8. If monitoring determines that grazing is adversely impacting aspen stands a plan would be prepared and implemented to mitigate these impacts.

9. The BLM will obtain a water right for the livestock watering well situated in the head of Hay Gulch if:

- The well is located on BLM surface.
- The well is a viable water source for livestock and wildlife.
- No water right currently exists for the well.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Will be conducted by the range staff.

NAME OF PREPARER: Mark Hafkenschiel, Rangeland Management Specialist

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline Hollowed

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:


Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

06/19/06

ATTACHMENTS: Location map of the Proposed Action.

Location Map of the Proposed Action CO-110-2006-093-EA

